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England won the 2022 T20 World Cup that was played in Australia | AP

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2024 MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP SET TO GET UNDERWAY ON JUNE 1 IN THE US

The marquee ICC tournament, to be held in United States & West Indies, will begin in Dallas with co-hosts USA taking on Canada. A look

BIGGEST WORLD CUP IN THE HISTORY OF SPORT

The 20-team, 55-match event that will begin in Dallas on June 1 is the biggest World Cup in the history of the sport. As many as nine associate nations will feature in the World Cup that will be played across three venues in the United States of America and six venues in West Indies. The final will be played in Barbados on June 29

INDIA-PAKISTAN ON JUNE 9 IN NEW YORK

- The Group A clash of India-Pakistan will be played in Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York on June 9. Canada, the USA and Ireland are the other teams in the same group along with India
- Top two teams from each group will advance to Super 8s and from there the semifinalists will be selected

MORE ON P19

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MATCHES WILL BE PLAYED IN THE US WHILE 41 GAMES ARE IN WEST INDIES

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Drama on high seas as Navy rescues hijacked ship

SANITISATION OPS
The Navy's Marine Commandos carry out a sanitisation operation onboard cargo ship MV Lila Norfolk in northern Arabian Sea
COSCO SHIPPING

MAYANK SINGH @New Delhi

THE Navy's marine commandos on Friday boarded a Liberian-flagged merchant vessel that was sought to be hijacked by armed pirates in the northern Arabian Sea off Somalia's coast and rescued 21 crew members, including 15 Indians. The commandoes then started sanitising the ship.

"The Indian Navy's marine commandos present onboard the Mission Deployed warship boarded the merchant vessel and have commenced the sanitisation operation," the Navy said.

The merchant vessel MV Lila Norfolk had sent a message via the United Kingdom Marine Trade Operations (UKMTO) portal on Thursday evening indicating that approximately five to six unknown armed personnel had boarded the ship.

Responding swiftly, the Navy diverted its frontline warship INS Chennai from its anti-piracy patrol to assist the ship in distress.

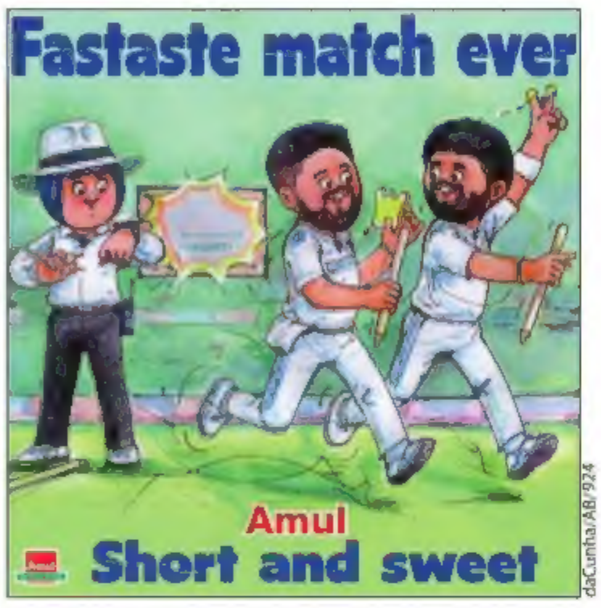
The Navy also deployed maritime patrol aircraft P8I and Predator MQ9B drones, which kept a close watch on the ship.

"The aircraft overflew the vessel on the early morning of (Friday) and established contact with the vessel, ascertaining the safety of the crew," the Navy said.

In an update on Friday evening, the UKMTO said, "Military forces have now boarded the vessel and conducted a thorough search. No unauthorised persons were found on board, all crew are safe and accounted for."

The latest incident comes days after two merchant vessels, MV Ruen and MV Chem Pluto, came under attack recently in the Arabian Sea.

MV Ruen was hijacked on December 14 while MV Chem Pluto was hit in a drone strike on December 23.



Govt estimates GDP to grow by 7.3% in 2023-24

MONIKA YADAV @New Delhi

THE government expects the GDP to grow 7.3% in FY24, much higher than most estimates. This growth outlook is even higher than the Reserve Bank of India's prediction of 7% for the current financial year. In FY23, the real GDP growth was estimated at 7.2% but this figure may change after the revised estimates are released on February 29, 2024.

Most estimates had pegged the GDP to grow at 6.5-7% in FY24. The government's higher-than-expected growth is driven largely by investment growth, though private consumption continues to trail the overall GDP growth rate. Gross fixed capital formation, or investments in asset creation, is estimated to grow at 10.3%, while private consumption may expand 4.4%. The government's final consumption expenditure is expected to grow at 4.1%.

On the supply side, agriculture growth has slowed down to 1.8% in FY24 as against 4% in FY23. Industrial sector and manufacturing sectors are estimated to grow at 7.9% and 6.5%, respectively, in FY24. Construction has emerged as one of the key growth drivers with a 10.7% growth in the current fiscal.

4 officials assaulted while raiding TMC leader's house in West Bengal; Guv warns Mamata govt

Horror as mob attack leaves ED team bleeding

PRANAB MONDAL @Kolkata

FOUR Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers were brutally assaulted and left bleeding allegedly by Trinamool Congress workers when the ED team attempted to search the house of TMC leader Sheikh Shajahan at Sandeshkhali in North 24-Parganas district on Friday morning. The vehicles of the ED sleuths were also damaged and the violent mob even chased away personnel of the Central Armed Police Force who were accompanying the ED team.

The unprecedented attack evoked a sharp reaction from Governor C V Ananda Bose, who warned the Mamata Banerjee-led government that Constitutional options will come into play if the 'barbarism' continues, while the opposition demanded President's rule in view of the breakdown of law and order. Condemning the ghastly attack, Governor Bose said such 'pre-election violence' will end soon. "This is the beginning of that end," he said. Sources said the governor has summoned the chief secretary and home secretary to the Raj Bhavan for an urgent meeting.

The ED search was in connection with the multi-crore ration scam. Sheikh is a close aide of former food supplies minister Jyotipriya Mallick, already arrested by the ED in connection with the same case.

According to sources, the ED officers were taken aback by the attack and had to run. They left behind their damaged vehicles and escaped in auto-rickshaws and two-wheelers. The CAPF personnel were outnumbered and fled the scene when the mob manhandled them. Later, the ED sleuths reached a riverine route and left in a police boat.

Sources said supporters of Sheikh, a local TMC leader, turned violent when the ED team tried to break open the locks of the door to go inside the house.

Explaining the events leading to the attack, an ED official said the four-member team reached Sheikh's house around 7 am. "The gates were locked from inside. We pressed the bell for 30 minutes, but there was no response. So, we decided to break in. Sheikh's followers started assembling when the CAPF personnel started breaking the locks. The crowd suddenly attacked us. One of our officers sustained a deep a head injury. We had no other option than fleeing."

The ED has filed a complaint with the local police for registration of an FIR.

Meanwhile, the TMC said the ED should have informed the police about the raid. "If they wanted secrecy, they could have informed the chief secretary," said minister Shashi Panja.

1) A seriously injured ED official after the attack. 2) Broken windows of the car in which the ED team travelled | PTI

ED RAIDS FIRM LINKED TO SHARAD PAWAR'S GRAND NEPHEW ROHIT

The Enforcement Directorate on Friday searched the premises of Baramati Agro, owned by MLA Rohit Pawar, the grand nephew of NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, and linked entities as part of a money laundering probe into the alleged Maharashtra State Cooperative Bank scam. At least six locations in Baramati, Pune, Pimpri and Aurangabad, official sources said

DKS' DA case: Pleas of CBI, Yatnal referred to CJ for larger bench

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Mysuru

THE legal tussle between the CBI and the state government over probe against Deputy Chief Minister **DK Shivakumar** in the DA case escalated further with the central agency moving the High Court of Karnataka, challenging the legality of the orders passed by the government to withdraw the consent given to it to prosecute him and transferring the case to the Lokayukta police.

Justice Krishna S Dixit on Friday referred the petitions of the CBI and BJP MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, questioning the legality of both the orders, to the Chief Justice for constitution of a larger bench to decide the matter, considering its enormity, which is first of its kind arising in Karnataka. The Congress government issued an order on November 28, 2023, withdrawing the consent given by the previous BJP government in 2019 to the CBI to prosecute Shivakumar. After this, the HC permitted Shivakumar to withdraw his pleas questioning the legality of the consent. Subsequently, on December 22, 2023, the Congress government issued another order entrusting the case to Lokayukta police.

Representing the CBI, advocate Prasanna Kumar contended that the order issued by the government withdrawing the consent would have no impact on the CBI's FIR as per the Supreme Court order in Kazi's case. The CBI, being the prosecuting agency, can independently challenge the action of the government. This apart, the action of the government in getting the case transferred to the Lokayukta police is without authority of law, he argued.

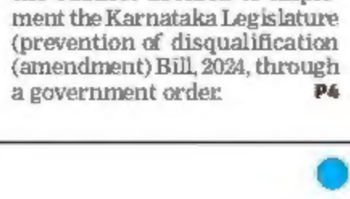
Echoing the CBI's views, advocate Venkatesh P Dalwai argued that the apex court has taken a view in almost similar cases that once the consent is accorded by the government, it cannot be withdrawn. Therefore, the CBI should continue its investigation and take the case to its logical conclusion.

Advocate-General Shashikiran Shetty opposed both petitions for lack of locus standi/maintainability. The third party cannot meddle with the criminal proceedings, he argued, citing an apex court judgment.

Meanwhile, the CBI's counsel submitted that the Lokayukta police may stop its investigation till the larger bench takes a decision. The AG submitted that the CBI should also stop its probe till that period. The court issued notices to the government, Lokayukta police and Shivakumar.

Cabinet nod for gratuity to unorganised sector workers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru



THE state cabinet on Friday approved a proposal of the labour department to implement the Payment of Gratuity Act 2024 to ensure that workers in the unorganised sector enjoy the benefits of it. Revealing this to reporters here, Law Minister HK Patil said the implementation of the Act will help those working in factories, shops and other commercial and non-establishments (unorganised sector). They will get gratuity for the number of years of service in any organisation in the sector on the lines of Provident Fund facility in the organised sector.

The cabinet decided to increase the upper age limit for recruitment of gazetted probationary officers for 2023-24. The upper age limit has been relaxed from 35 to 38 for general, 38 to 41 for OBCs, and from 40 to 43 for SCs and STs.

The other decisions are: Extension of deadline by three more months to surrender wildlife trophies and items, increase the percentage of Kannada in name boards from 50 to 60 for business establishments, Rs 800 crore for white-topping of roads in BBMP limits, Rs 25 crore to upgrade infrastructure at UVCE in Bengaluru, to continue grant-in-aid for salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff of BVB Engineering College in Hubballi till 2024-25, Rs 71.38 core for data digitisation and migration support for 5,491 Primary Agricultural Credit Society (PACS), reduce the year of service from 5 to 3 for assistant registrars to promote them as deputy registrars, giving powers to invite tenders for procurement of items for hostels run by the BC department to deputy commissioners, and a grant of Rs 45.70 crore for Chamundeshwari temple in Mysuru.

The cabinet decided to exempt motor vehicle tax on BMTC, KSRTC, NWKRTC and KKRTC amounting to Rs 581.47 crore. It approved a proposal to run 10 double-decker electric buses through Gross Cost Contract (GCC) in Bengaluru.

To protect the legislators, who have been appointed as CM's advisors with cabinet rank from the threat of disqualification for holding the office of profit, the cabinet decided to implement the Karnataka Legislature (prevention of disqualification (amendment) Bill, 2024, through a government order.

P4

EXPRESS READ

Aditya-L1 to be put in final destination orbit today

BENGALURU: ISRO has geared up to perform a crucial manoeuvre on Saturday to put its Aditya-L1 spacecraft into its final destination orbit, some 1.5 million km from the Earth. The Lagrange point (L1) of the Sun-Earth system is about one per cent of the total distance between the Earth and the Sun. P5

Parl breach: Court allows polygraph test of accused

New Delhi: A court here on Friday allowed the Delhi Police to conduct the polygraph test of five of the six accused -- Manoranjan D, Sagar Sharma, Amol Dhanraj Shinde, Lalit Jha and Mahesh Kumawat -- arrested in connection with the Parliament security breach.

IISc develops clean, green cooling tech for Indian Navy

BOSKY KHANNA @Bengaluru

A team of seven scientists and researchers from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has developed a clean green cooling technology using carbon dioxide (CO_2). But this time, the technological innovation is for the Indian Navy.

The team from the Interdisciplinary Centre for Energy Research (ICER), IISc, developed a transcritical CO_2-based refrigeration and heat pump system. The system has completed 1,300 hours of testing at Maharashtra-based naval base INS Shivaji. It will be officially inaugurated by the Navy this month.

Elaborating on the refrigeration system, the researchers at ICER, told The New Indian Express: "Current refrigeration systems use synthetic chemicals such as HFCs and HFOs for cooling. These synthetic refrigerants emit significant greenhouse gas emissions. The Navy wanted to be the first in India to introduce a green technology for cooling which is compact and best suited for its ships and submarines. It approached IISc for a unique room cooling system using CO_2, which is reliable, robust and provides stable cooling, and at the same time can also be used for heating." P9

IOA NAMES CEO

RAGHURAM TO JOIN FROM JAN 15

In what was a long overdue decision, the Indian Olympic Association has named former Rajasthan Royals and RPSG sports CEO Raghuram Iyer as its Chief Executive Officer on Friday | P19

Dost dost na raha: Dhoni duped of ₹15 cr, files criminal case

MUKESH RANJAN @Ranchi

FORMER India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has lodged a criminal case at a Ranchi Civil Court, alleging that he has been duped by his ex-business partners. He alleged that his partners — Mihir Diwakar and Soumya Das of Aarka Sports and Management Limited — cheated him of ₹15 crore in the name of opening cricket academies across India and abroad.

Dhoni and Diwakar were longtime friends and played Ranji Trophy matches for Bihar and Jharkhand. Dhoni, in his complaint, alleged that Aarka Sports failed to adhere to the conditions specified in the agreement due to which he suffered a loss of ₹15 crore.

According to Dhoni's advocate Dayanand Singh, "An agreement was signed between Mihir Diwakar and Soumya Das of Aarka Sports and Management Private Limited and M S Dhoni in 2017 saying the company will open cricket academies in his name and pay him the franchisee fee. On that basis, Dhoni gave them an authority letter. The company paid the fees initially but stopped doing so later and also did not inform Dhoni about opening new academies."

Dhoni then revoked the authority given to the company on August 15, 2021. Dayanand added that despite sending a legal notice in 2022, the company continued opening academies and collecting money without Dhoni's knowledge.

Dayanand said the criminal case was heard for the first time on Friday and the next hearing is slated for January 20.

The case has been filed under Sections 406 (criminal breach of trust), 420 (cheating), 468 (forgery), 471 (fraud) and 120B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code.

As for Diwakar, he claimed innocence. He said he hasn't violated any agreement, adding that after Dhoni sent a notice they stopped using his name.

"I clarify that there is no dues/outstanding of MSD with me rather MSD has to pay certain amounts which has been collected from academies directly by Shri MS Dhoni," he told this daily in a statement.